



Under The Microscope

Spotlight on Laboratory Issues

ISDH To Expand Laboratory Capacity With Two New Facilities

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Architectural rendition of the State of Indiana Forensic and Health Sciences Laboratories.
Photo courtesy of the Indiana State Police.

In early June, Governor Joe Kernan and other state officials broke ground for a new \$46 million laboratory building. The State of Indiana Forensic and Health Sciences Laboratories will house the Indiana State Department of Health Laboratories, the Indiana State Police Forensic Laboratories, and the State Department of Toxicology, which is affiliated with the Indiana University School of Medicine.

The facility will be located at 550 West 16th Street, northwest of the intersection of 16th Street and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street, in the heart of the Central Indiana life sciences corridor. The 188,000 square-foot building will include two three-story wings, joined by a three-story connector. The State Police Forensic laboratories will occupy the wing nearest to 16th Street, while the wing north of the connector will house the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) and State Toxicology Laboratories.

The building will contain laboratory training rooms, which can be utilized to improve the proficiency of laboratory technicians across Indiana. The wing housing the ISDH Laboratories will also include state-of-the-art laboratory facilities for handling threats of chemical and biological terrorism.

Ratio Architects of Indianapolis leads the design team for the facility. Completion of the building is scheduled for the fall of 2006.

Another building project currently underway at the ISDH is the installation of a modular bio-safety level 3 (BSL-3) containment laboratory. The nearly 3,000 square-foot unit will contain laboratory space for handling chemical and biological agents from suspected terrorism events.

The modular unit contains a receiving area, with a glove box and an x-ray machine to examine a sample prior to testing. The unit is equipped with two separate laboratory areas, one for handling chemical materials and another for handling biological materials. It also includes a restroom and shower, a hydrogen peroxide decontamination system, and a generator.



Exterior view of the ISDH modular bio-safety level 3 containment laboratory. Photo courtesy of Bill White, ISDH



Interior of the ISDH modular bio-safety level 3 containment laboratory. Photo courtesy of Bill White, ISDH.

The modular lab was manufactured by a company in Iowa and transported in sections on semi-tractor trailers to the site in Indianapolis. The various sections were unloaded by a 150-ton crane and placed on a concrete slab foundation. When the electrical, plumbing, and other systems have been connected and thoroughly inspected, the lab will be turned over to the ISDH. The unit is expected to be fully operational by the September 2004.
